

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated September 10, 2003. Claims 1 to 20 are pending. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks.

The specification has been amended to correct an error.

Claims 1-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Herz, U.S. Patent No. 6,460,036. The Examiner stated essentially that Herz teaches all the claimed limitations of claims 1-20.

Claim 1 claims, *inter alia*, "defining a plurality of environmental parameters for controlling user interaction; defining a plurality of user representation parameters of user data within the environment; capturing user data from the user; building an abstract graphical display of the environment". Claim 11 recites, *inter alia*, "defining the social proxy for a virtual environment and facilitating user interaction." Claim 19 claims, "a processor for receiving information from a plurality of users and presenting said information in a graphical form to the plurality of users, wherein the plurality of users communicate user data to the processor for incorporation in the graphical environment as user proxies, the user data is abstracted to provide the user proxy."

Herz teaches a Virtual Community Service, which is a network-based agent that seeks out users of a network with common interests, dynamically creates bulletin boards or electronic mailing lists for those users, and introduces them to each other electronically via e-mail (see col. 74, lines 51-56). Herz does not teach building an abstract graphical display of the environment as claimed in claim 1. Referring to claim 11, Herz does not teach defining the social proxy for a

virtual environment and facilitating user interaction. A social proxy is an abstract graphical representation of an environment. Herz teaches only text-based systems, e.g., bulletin boards or electronic mailing lists. Herz does not teach an abstract graphical display of the environment. A bulletin board or electronic mailing list, as taught by Herz, is a rigid system wherein an environment is a group messages. The group of messages is a literal environment and is not an abstraction of an environment. Therefore, Herz does not teach every limitation of claims 1 and 11.

Referring to claim 19, Herz does not teach a processor for receiving information from a plurality of users and presenting said information in a graphical form to the plurality of users, wherein the plurality of users communicate user data to the processor for incorporation in the graphical environment as user proxies, the user data is abstracted to provide the user proxy. Herz teaches that user data is textual messages posted to a bulletin board or electronic mailing list. Herz does not abstract user data to arrive at a user proxy. Therefore, Herz fails to teach all the limitations of claim 19.

The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-10 depend from claim 1. Claims 12-18 depend from claim 11. Claim 20 depends from claim 19. The dependent claims are believed to be allowable to at least the reasons given for claims 1, 11, and 19, respectively.

At least claims 2, 6, and 12 are believed to be allowable for additional reasons.

Claim 2 claims, *inter alia*, "displaying an abstract graphical cue of a first user parameter in the environmental structure, wherein the abstract graphical cue moves through the environment according to a second user parameter to provide a second abstract graphical cue."

Herz teaches that a user may at any time send signed control messages to proxy server S2, specifying the credentials or Boolean combinations of credentials that proxy server S2 should thenceforth consider to be adequate grounds for releasing a specified subset of the information associated with pseudonym P (see col. 45 line 61 to col. 46, line 13). However, a user defining grounds for releasing information does not teach displaying an abstract graphical cue of a first user parameter in the environmental structure, wherein the abstract graphical cue moves through the environment according to a second user parameter to provide a second abstract graphical cue as claimed in claim 2. Herz's text based systems do not teach an abstract graphical cue, much less that an abstract graphical cue moves through the environment according to a second user parameter. Accordingly, it is respectfully believed that Herz does not teach all the limitations of claim 2.

Claim 6 recites, *inter alia*, "wherein the user data is captured from a user's activity within the online environment, wherein the user data is abstracted to provide the user representation." Claim 12 claims, *inter alia*, "wherein the social proxy is defined by a provider and the user proxy is defined by an abstraction of the updatable variables."

Herz teaches a search profile consisting of a collection of attributes, such that a user likes target objects whose profiles are similar to this collection, of attributes (see col. 4, lines 59-63). Herz does not teach that user data/updatable variables are abstracted to provide a user representation/user proxy, essentially as claimed in claims 6 and 12, respectively. The user data of Herz is presented as raw data, for example, titles of movies, dates of release, etc. in the case of attributes pertaining to movies (see col. 10, lines 11-29). Herz does not teach an abstraction of user data. Therefore, Herz fails to teach all the limitations of claims 6 and 12.

The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, the application, including claims 1 to 20, is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons stated. The Examiner's withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested. For the forgoing reasons, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Nathaniel T. Wallace
Reg. No. 48,909
Attorney for Applicants

F. CHAU & ASSOCIATES, LLP
1900 Hempstead Turnpike, Suite 501
East Meadow, New York 11554
(516) 357-0091
(516) 357-0092 (FAX)

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION (MARKEDUP)

Fig. 10 depicts a graphical representation of activity levels within the online collaborative environment. Fig. 10 embodies the same elements as Fig. 6: overall proxy circles (23000), divided quadrants (lines 23010 through 23040), proxy name (23050), user labels (23140 through 23160), user index dots (23170 through 23190), category labels (23090 through ~~23080~~23110). These representation and functions remain consistent with respective elements in Fig. 6, with exception of the category clusters (23060 through 23080) which remain simultaneously displayed in lieu of the category circles (19060 through 19080 respectively). As the user mouses over a category cluster (e.g., 23060) or its category label (e.g., 23100), a line (23230) matches it up with its associated circle or label.